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HOUSE PASSES GAMING LEGISLATION

~Focused on Bringing in Significant Revenues, Curtails Gambling, Closes Loopholes~

TALLAHASSEE, FL – The Florida House of Representatives today passed Senate Bill (SB) 788 which sets the parameters for a new Seminole Indian Gambling Compact. SB 788 proposes new compact terms to be negotiated by the Governor and Seminole Tribe by August 31, 2009 and is subject to future Legislative approval. The bill passed 82 to 35.

The Legislature was forced to engage on this issue after Governor Crist entered into a gaming compact with the Seminole Tribe that was challenged by the Florida House and resulted in the Florida Supreme Court declaring the Governor's Compact unconstitutional. Moreover, if provisions of the new compact relating to covered games, the amount of revenue sharing payments, suspension or reduction of payments, or exclusivity contained in SB 788 are amended, then these amendments are also subject to Legislative ratification.

The compact terms as agreed to by the Legislature reduces the expansion of gambling originally proposed by the Governor. While the House has never advocated or relied upon gaming revenues to balance Florida's budget, the terms proposed by the Legislature deliver more revenues, guarantee more oversight, and are a better deal for Floridians than the original terms proposed.

The Legislature's proposals ensure that the expansion of gambling proposed in the original Compact is curtailed and loopholes in current law are closed. The Legislature responsibly considered all of the industries that would be affected by a compact and ensured that Florida received a benefit commensurate with those afforded the Tribe.

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